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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms* Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

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historic	Seagate e	Powel Crosley, Jr. Re	House)	<u>.</u>
and/or common	Bay Club			
2. Loca				
street & number	6565 N ort	h Tamiami Trail	Ľ	I/A not for publication
city, town $\int d$	arasota-	menty _X vicinity of	Sarasota	
state _Flor:		code ¹² county	Manatee	code 81
3. Clas	sification	1		
Category district _X_ building(s) structure site object	Ownership public _X_ private both Public Acquisitic in process being conside N/A	X yes: restricted	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation X other: Club
4. Own	er of Pro	perty	ti in the second sec Second second	an an ann an Arland Carlon an Arland. Carl an Arland
name Christo street & number	· · · · ·	Campeau Corporation of cissus Avenue, Suite 70		• · · · ·
city, town Wes	st Palm Beach	vicinity of	state	Florida
5. Loca	ation of L	egal Descripti	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc.	Sarasota County Cour	thouse	•
street & number	101 So	uth Washington Boulevar	d	
city, town	Sarasota		state	Florida
6. Repi	resentati	on in Existing	Surveys	
title	N/A	has this pro	operty been determined el	igible? yes _ <u>X</u> no
date	N/A		federal stat	te county loca
depository for su	urvey records N/2	Α	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
city, town	N/A	A	state	

7. Description

Condition

excellent	deteriorated
<u> </u>	ruins
fair	unexposed

Check one _____ unaltered _X__ altered

Check one X original site moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

"Seagate" is a two and two-and-one-half storey cast stone and stucco building designed in the Mediterranean Revial Style by the New York City and Sarasota architect George Albree Freeman. The residence is located on a forty-five acre site fronting Sarasota Bay in an unicor porated area of Manatee County. Also located on the site are a two-storey three-car garage south of th house and a terrazzo-trimed swimming pool located on axis with the entrance bay of the house between it and Sarasota Bay.

Although actually a steel frame structure clad in cast stone and scored stucco, Seagate or the Bay Club creates the impression of a solid masonry structure. The battered rusticated base of Seagate is constructed of cast stone, but reads as granite. The cast stone quions resemble limestone. The massive stucco and cast stone volumes are relieved by decorative cast stone ornamentation, dark wood elements, wrought iron, flagstone and terra cotta tiling--all of which provide a contrast in color and texture with the overall severity of the greige facade. Post and lintel construction wood porches and a shed window projection enhance the facades with a dark color, contrast in texture and the use of carved and polychromed brackets. Wrought iron balcony railings, window grilles and "Spanish galleon" weathervane provide further ornamental contrast to the cast stone and stucco facades. A rose and salmon colored flagstone patio and walkway appeared at the west approach to the house. The risers and treads of all exterior stairs are covered with earch-toned tiles. All exterior roof surfaces were originally covered in barrel-shaped, terra-cotta tiles.

The major entrances to the house are located in the two-and-one-half storey central block. Both land (east) and Bay (west) entrances are achieved through a progression of semi-enclosed spaces, a series of porches and enclosures which precede the interior core of the living room. The east-west entrance approaches provide a cross-axis with the north-south orientation of the baronial-sized living room, (46' 10" x 24' 6") The sequence from the land approach consists of a one-storey porte-cochere, the entrance porch, followed by the living room interior core. From the Bay side there exists a low wall enclosure of the patio and curving exterior stairways which flank the loggia entrances and bracket the patio space. The wood-grilled, screened loggia area opens on to the living room. The living room is on cross-axis with both primary entrances.

The entrance block is flanked by two, two-and-one-half storey projecting wings. These wings intersect the north and south ends of the entrance block. All ground-floor public rooms of the north and south wings are accessible from the living room through a pair of arched and panelled doorways, located at the north and south exposures of the living room. In the north wing the public rooms included a pantry/bar, a library, coat closet and a ground floor bedroom and bath; while the south wing consisted of the dining room and a butler's pantry. The main stairway which led to the master bedrooms above, is located on the north side of the living room. On the second floor of the entrance block, a central corridor provided access to the gallery, while six bedrooms with six adjoining baths also fed off the central corridor. A11 master and guest bedrooms were located in the entrance block, north and south flanking wings. With the ground-floor bedroom, located in the north-east corner of the north wing, there were seven complete bedrooms and baths. The two-and-one-half storey tower which intersects the south wing and lesser, two-storey kitchen wing, is a prominent feature. The tower is semicircular in plan in the ground-floor breakfast room; while the second-floor "Ship Room" is fully circular in plan.

There are two, two-storey, intersecting staff wings, located at the south end of the complex; one with an east-west roof slope, the other with a north-south roof slope. The staff wings are lower in floor-to- ceiling heights and only two-storeys tall. Even the exterior ornament is

8. Significance



Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"Seagate" or the Bay Club is an architecturally distinguished seasonal estate built in 1929 for Powel Crosley, Jr. of Cincinnati. Crosley is known as the inventor/promoter of the Crosley Radio_and subsequent owner of Cincinnati radio station WLW and of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team. The architect of the building, George Albree Freeman, Jr., is recognized on a local and national level, having worked with Simon and Hall on the Sarasota Post Office, and having shared a New York Office with Bruce during the period 1929 and 1934, Seagate was the embodiment of the well-appointed seasonal estate. It represents an era, a quality of life, as well as excellence in design and craftsmanship.

The forty-five acre site of the Bay Club has local historical significance having been the By 1911, homestead of Lavanius Dunham, M.D., one of the early residents of Manatee County. a section of the Bay Club tract was briefly owned by A.B. Edwards, a local political figure. However, it was Powel Crosley, Jr., the wealthy Cincinnati industrialist, who fully developed the site. In June of 1929, Crosley assembled the acreage and commissioned the New York City and Sarasota architect George Albree Freeman, Jr., to design a residence on the site. Freeman had studied architecture at M.I.T. and maintained an office in New York at 28 West 23rd Street which he shared with the prominent architect, Bruce Price. Together Freeman and Price design ed a Shingle Style Residence, "Seacroft", located near Seabright, New Jersey. The drawings for the resort Shingle Style house are dated 1882. Freeman's architectural commissions in New York include a Neo-Georgian building of 1904, extant at 128 East 44th Street. The identification panel on the June 1929 drawings for the Crosley Mansion, lists only a Sarasota office for Mr. Freeman; and by 1929, Mr. Freeman may well have retired to Florida. According to Withey, Freeman died November 22, 1934 and received a New York Times obituary notice of 11-24-34-further recognition of his stature in the architectural community on a national level.

The original drawings for the powel Crosley Mansion were drafted by Ivo A. de Minicis, who was born in Rimini, Italy in 1897.¹⁰ Six sheets of the orginal architectural drawings survive. According to one of Mr. de Minicis' subsequent partners in his Tampa architectural office. Mr. de Minicis also worked for the architect Thomas Martin of Sarasota during the 1920's. Thomas Martin is credited with the original sketch for the John Ringling house, "Ca d' Zan", although the Ringling house was ultimately executed by the New York architect, Dwight James Baum. Mr. de Minicis' widow recalls that her husband was instrumental in the completion of the Baum design as well.¹² By the late 1930's, de Minicis was registered and practicing architecture in Tampa. His branch office in Sarasota was run by Frank Martin, the son of Thomas Martin Mr. de Minicis is primarily known for his successful use of the Mediterranean Revival Style for residences, schools and church architecture (his firm was responsible for the Riverside Baptist Church and convent at St. Joseph's in the Tampa Bay area).¹³ His partmer, Frank Patterson, described Mr. de Minicis as a historical architect, one of the only Florida architects who owned a copy of Regole delle cinque ordini (1562) by Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola.

Who influenced whom in the design of "Seagate" is open to conjecture. Freeman was a man of seventy, while his draftsman de Minicis was thirty-two in 1929. For a brief period Freeman was in practice with Bruce Price. The Crosley Mansion design reflects a familiarity with earlier cross-axis designs with "Loire Valley" towers. "Seagate" is more academic in design

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

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reduced-- there is a simple cast stone watertable, rather than the rusticated and battered profile base of the formal wings. The original uses included: kitchen, servants' hall, and porch; while the second floor consisted of staff quarters. The floors of the service wings are terrazzo in contrast to the tiled surfaces of the formal quarters. There is a concrete service enclosure located at the rear of the staff complex.

Prominent (Existing) Interior Features:

Fireplaces: Cast stone fireplaces include the floor-to-ceiling living room fireplace, located on the west wall of the room. The mantle is decorated with a foliated frieze and is supported by brackets and engaged columns. The large chimney breast extends to the beamed ceiling of the living room. The northwest corner bedroom of the north wing contains a cast stone surround fireplace which is Medieval in flavor with its ogee surround.

Floor Surfaces: All public, master and guest sleeping quarters (with the exception of the "Ship Room") floors are covered with tiled patterns. These tiles appear to be stock 1920's brands ("Wheatley" or "Nemadji") laid in imaginative patterns. 10 The staff quarters have terrazzo flooring.

Ceiling Beams: Chamfered ceiling beams of darkly stained wood are used on the living room ceiling. Five massive beams run the length of the living room and intersect with shorter rafters which run in a east - west direction. Large brackets are used to ornamentally support the wood beams. Delicate polychrome stencilling appears on the dark surfaces. The north-west corner bedroom of the north wing also has a stencilled, beamed ceiling.

Main Staircase: Located within a rectangular recess at the north side of the living room, the main staircase has a massive cast stone railed enclosure, polychromed tile risers and stair strings and a rope handrail.

"Ship Room": Located at the second floor level of the tower wing, the "Ship Room" is the most significant extant interior space. The floor, cylindrical walls and ceiling surfaces are panelled. The raised ceiling beams radiate out from concentric circles of raised wood ceiling mouldings and the beams terminate in a brace/truss system at the circumference of the circular ceiling. Carved human heads appear on the corbel ends. Wood inlay is used. At the center of the ceiling is a polychromed wind indicator which connects with the "Spanish galleon" weather vane system on the tower roof. The carpentry work is worthy of a shipwright. The "oculi" on the exterior of the tower, read as brasstrimmed portholes from the interior of the "Ship Room". The carved and panelled entrance door of the room, contains a "Speakeasy" door grate-- perhaps the "Ship Room" served a different purpose during Prohibition. The "Ship Room" is in an excellent state of repair

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Alterations to the Crosley Mansion include the removal of the original barrel-tiled roof material once used on the roofs of the entrance block, north wing, south wing, two service wings and porte-cochere (barrel tiles remain on the chimney "roofs" and the window shed projection located @ ground floor, south wing, west elevation). The surfaces of the major roofs are currently covered in a green asphalt composition material. The original cast stone and stucco facade materials of the house are in sound condition, although discoloration caused by corroded iron balconies and window grilles is evident. Several of the original pecky cypress exterior porches are deteriorated -- in particular, several of the corner posts and bracket heads of the second-floor gallery are missing or deteriorated. The corrosive action of salt air is evident in the decay of several of the original wrought iron balconies and window grilles. The original metal casement windows show weather and corrosive damage, caused by a combination of salt action and maintenance neglect. Most of the damage is remedial. Site alterations include the recent demolition of the swimming pool, flagstone patio surface and fountain. The twostorey, three-car garage is deteriorated and alleged to be structurally unsound.

It is the intent of the current owner/developer to convert "Seagate" for use as the promotional headquarters and subsequently, the clubhouse for the proposed residential development, the Bay Club.

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and handling than many of its contemporary estates. The Mediterranean Revival Style ornamentation is certainly Italian for the most part. Freeman would have been familiar with the Renaissance and Second Renaissance Revival Styles as interpreted in New York by McKim, Mead and White. It is also possible that de Minicis was responsible for the stylistic and academic interpretations.

In his use of the Mediterranean Revival Style, Freeman practiced an eclecticism common among the better architects who designed seasonal estates for wealthy clients in popular Florida resort areas of the 1920's. "Seagate" is one of the most successful examples of the melding of historical vocabulary. Unlike many 1920's residences, the Crosley Mansion is not a pastiche of historical styles, but rather a conscious borrowing from the past (quattrocentro, Baroque Italian elements with elements of the Spanish Colonial Revival) and re-interpretation in a modern 1929 context.

The speed with which the residence was constructed is noteworthy. According to an advertisement placed in the 1930-1931 <u>Sarasota Visitor's Guide</u> by the building contractor Paul W. Bergmann of Sarasota, the Crosley Mansion was completed in 135 construction days. The full-page advertisement includes a photograph of the west facade of the house. The period of significance reflects the decade that Mr. & Mrs. Crosley visisted Sarasota-- living in "Seagate" during the season until February of 1939. Mrs. Crosley died at "Seagate" on the 26th of February 1939. After her death Powel Crosley used the house infrequently. The 1947 inventory which accompanied the sale of "Seagate" and contents provides further evidence of the comfort of "Seagate".

Footnotes:

¹ Who's Who in America, (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co., 1943), 18, p. 639.

² Manatee County, Manatee County Historical Records Library, Liber Deeds B, p. 59.

³ Manatee County, Liber Deeds 112, p. 44.

⁴ A. Horton, <u>Bay Club History</u>, (unpublished, n.d.), p. 4.

⁵ Dennis Steadman Francis, <u>Architects in Practice New York City 1840-1900</u>, (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1980, p. 32, 63.

⁶ Vincent J. Scully, Jr., <u>The Shingle Style and The Stick Style</u>, (1955; rpt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), illustration #103.

⁷ New York City, Landmarks Preservation Commission, Urban Cultural Resources Survey Department, Computor Survey of Manhattan.

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⁸ George Albree Freeman, Jr., "Residence for Mr. Powel Crosley, Jr., Sarasota, Florida", Original Drawings, Six Sheets, June 1929, (On file: Tichenor & Lindner Architects, Inc., Sarasota, Florida).

⁹ Henry F. Withey, <u>Biographical Dictionary of American Architects Deceased</u>, (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 222.

¹⁰ Mrs. Ivo A. de Minicis, telephone interview conducted by Sarah Kearns, 9-2-82, (Notes on file: 432 Brazilian Avenue, Palm Beach, Florida).

¹¹ Mr. James Sullivan, telephone interview conducted by Sarah Kearns, 8-27-82, (Notes on file: 432 Brazilian Avenue, Palm Beach, Florida).

¹² Mrs. Ivo A. de Minicis, telephone interview, 9-2-82.

¹³ Frank Patterson, telephone Inverview conducted by Sarah Kearns, 8-31-82 & 9-1-82, (Notes of file: 432 Brazilian Avenue, Palm Beach, Florida).

¹⁴ <u>Sarasota Visitor Guide 1930-1931</u>, (Sarasota: Roger V. Flory with Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, 1930), Advertisement, Paul W. Bergmann.

¹⁵ Manatee County, Manatee County Historical Records Library, Liber Deeds 241, pp. 347-350.

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Withey, Henry F. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects Deceased. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

ORAL HISTORY:

- de Minicis, Mrs. Ivo A. Telephone Interview by Sarah Kearns, 9-2-82. Notes on file: 432 Brazilian Avenue, Palm Beach, Florida.
- Patterson, Frank. Telephone Interview by Sarah Kearns, 8-31-82 & 9-1-82. Notes on file: 432 Brazilian Avenue, Palm Beach, Florida.
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